



Hans Eysenck in Latin America: His influence in the psychology, the study of personality and individual differences



Carmen Flores-Mendoza^{b,*}, Ruben Ardila^c, Miguel Gallegos^d, Luciana Sampaio Braga^a,
Bruna Miranda Carvalhais Santiago^b, Daniel Marcos Andrade^a

^a Laboratório de Avaliação das Diferenças Individuais, Departamento de Psicologia, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil

^b Neuroscience Pos-Graduation Program, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil

^c Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Colombia

^d Universidad de Rosario, Argentina

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ABSTRACT

Hans Eysenck's works have had a substantial influence on the study of psychology in Latin America. His personality characteristics (sometimes dogmatic and incisive) and high intelligence (shrewd critic, a rigorous methodologist) were noted in the few visits that he made to the Latin America region (one of those visits called as "The Eysenck Affairs"). Considered as one of the most important scientists of psychology, Eysenck arrived into Latin American academic establishment in an epoch dominated by psychoanalysis, and showed us one of the strongest personality paradigms that the psychology has given to our times. The Latin-America psychology is returning to the investigation of personality traits from a psychometric approach. Certainly, underlying this returning, the Eysenck's PEN model is the principal driver. This tribute shows how the Eysenck's ideas arrived in the Latin American region and the potential of his influence in the future.

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1. Introduction

Hans Eysenck was considered one of the most famous psychologists of the 20th century (Haggbloom et al., 2002). There have been criticisms relating to lists of eminent psychologists (Black, 2003; Diener, Oishi, & Park, 2014); however, there is no doubt that Eysenck has secured a prominent place in the history of twentieth-century psychology. Even in Latin America there is a study in regards to the top one hundred books on psychology (Ardila, 1974, 2011), in which the writings of Eysenck (1967, 1973) are a part.

The ideas of Eysenck were known in Latin America since the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. First, some of his books were translated into Spanish and distributed throughout Mexico, Argentina, and Spain; later, his books were translated into Portuguese and made available to Brazil (see list of books in Table 1). The *Scientific Study of Personality* was one of the first of Eysenck's book translated into Spanish by a Latin American publisher company (Editora Paidós — Argentina). Jaime Bernstein, who was one of the founders of the Editora Paidós and specialized in psychometric techniques and personality assessment, supervised the translation.

* Corresponding author at: Av. Antônio Carlos, 6627, Faculdade de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, Departamento de Psicologia -Laboratório de Avaliação das Diferenças Individuais, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, CEP: 31270-901, Brazil.

E-mail addresses: carmenflor@uol.com.br, carmencita@fafich.ufmg.br (C. Flores-Mendoza).

Eysenck's critiques of psychoanalysis and dynamic psychotherapy as well as his studies in clinical psychology from the scientific perspective were admired (Ardila, 2011). However, during the 1970s and 1980s, his works were considered controversial and, thus, were not part of mainstream psychology, nor were they assimilated into Latin American psychology.

Eysenck visited the Latin America region on three occasions. The first visit happened on November 1981 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He was invited to participate, along with Ruben Ardila (Colombia), as the first keynote speaker in the First Congress of Psychotherapies, organized by the University of Belgrano. Eysenck presented his research work on behavior therapy. He explained the conceptual and experimental bases, efficacy, follow-up, and the prevention of functional disorders. This multitudinous congress was widely covered by the Argentina mass media. Three factors were related to this enormous interest. First, psychoanalysis and psychology in most Latin American countries, especially Argentina, were considered virtually the same discipline (Dagfal, 2000; Gallegos, 2005; Klappenbach, 2000). Therefore, a different therapeutic approach, far away of psychoanalysis, would be presented for the first time. Secondly, the new therapeutic perspective arrived at the time a great effort was being made in Argentina to identify the specific roles for psychologists. According to Korman, Viotti and Garay (2010), the Ministry of Education of Argentina had regulated the activities of psychologists with "the three not": "not to psychoanalytic practice", "not to psychotherapy" and "not to the administration of psychotropic". Thirdly, for the first time, the name of a conference was not related to

Table 1
Translation to Spanish and Portuguese of Hans Eysenck's books.

Year	Title	Spanish			Portuguese		
		Country	Publishing	Year	Country	Publishing	Year
1953	Uses and abuses of psychology	Spain	Biblioteca Nueva	1957	Brazil	Ibrasa	1964
1952	The scientific study of personality	Argentina	Paidós	1959			
1954	The psychology of politics	Spain	Ariel	1964			
1956	Sense and nonsense in psychology	Spain	Morata	1962	Brazil	Ibrasa	1974
1960	Handbook of abnormal psychology	Mexico	El Manual Moderno	1983			
1962	Know your own I.Q.	Argentina	Paidós	1968	Brazil	Mestre Jou	1973
1964	Crime and personality	Spain	Marova	1976			
1964	Experiments in behavior therapy	Spain	Fundamentos	1979			
1965	Fact and fiction in psychology	Spain	Alianza	1977	Brazil	Ibrasa	1968
1966	Check your own I.Q.	Spain	Ibérico Europea	1969	Brazil	Mestre Jou	1973
1967	The biological basis of personality	Spain	Fontanella	1970			
1971	Race, intelligence and education	Spain	Aura	1973	Brazil	Eldorado	1971
1972	Lexicon de psicología	Spain	Rioduero	1979	Brazil	Loyola	1981
1972	Psychology is about people	Spain	Alianza	1979	Brazil	Ibrasa	1976
1973	The inequality of man	Spain	Alianza	1981	Brazil	Zahar	1976
1973	The experimental study of freudian theories	Spain	Alianza	1980			
1976	A textbook of human psychology	Mexico	El Manual Moderno	1980			
1976	Sex and personality	Spain	Cátedra	1982			
1977	You and neurosis	Argentina	Huemul	1978	Brazil	Zahar	1979
1979	The psychology of sex	Spain	Herder	1981			
1979	The structure and measurement of intelligence	Spain	Herder	1983			
1981	Intelligence: the battle for the mind	Spain	Pirámide	1983	Brazil	UnB	1982
1981	Mindwatching	Spain	Anaya	1982	Brazil	Círculo do livro	1981
1982	Explaining the unexplained	Spain	Sudamericana/Planeta	1984			
1985	Personality and individual Differences: a natural science approach	Spain	Pirámide	1987	Brazil	Record	1993
1985	Decline and fall of the freudian empire	Spain	Nuevo Arte Thor	1988			
1991	Smoking, personality and stress	Spain	Herder	1994			
1975	Know your own personality				Brazil	Nova Época	1979

"psychoanalysis". It was related to "psychotherapies". With these three factors surrounding the conference, the audience witnessed the strong confrontation between Eysenck and the local psychoanalytical *intelligentsia*. According to Fernandez-Alvares, a clinical Argentinian psychologist, for Eysenck "lie seemed to be in a place where people, supposedly under the protection of science, were ignorant of those things which could be effective in improving the health of people" while for psychoanalysts "(...) it did not matter behavioral therapy as Eysenck defended, because all those proposals sounded like 'Clockwork Orange'..." (Korman, Viotti, & Garay, 2010, pp.146).

The impact of Eysenck's visit was felt in Argentinian psychology for years. Along with Michael Mahoney, Aaron Beck, and Vittorio Guidano, Eysenck was important to the consolidation of cognitive psychotherapy. While it is true that his excessive confrontation with psychoanalysis may have limited his role in the Argentina psychology, it is also true that Eysenck inspired a generation of therapists to search for better treatments for their patients (Korman, 2011). According to Ruben Ardila (one of the authors of this article), who was present at this conference, Eysenck's participation was extremely meaningful.

His next visit was Mexico, where he participated as one of the main speakers at the XXIII International Congress of Psychology (Acapulco, September 2–7, 1984). His discussions regarding arousal-oriented personality dimensions were subsequently mentioned in the Eysenck's book *Personality Dimensions and Arousal* (Strelau & Eysenck, 1987).

The third visit was to Colombia. Invited by Ruben Ardila, Eysenck was the principal speaker in the VI Colombian Congress of Psychology (April 30–May 3, 1993). On this occasion, more than 1500 participants gathered at the conference. By this time, there was already a critical mass of researchers, clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, and experts in personality measurement, who were well acquainted with the Eysenck's work. Eysenck delivered lectures about intelligence, psychology of health, cancer, genius and creativity.

These visits to Latin America permitted Eysenck to spread his ideas in the region. Some students even went to Great Britain to study with him. Notable among them was Eva Mikusinski, who for years was the most knowledgeable and fervent advocate of Eysenck's work in

Argentina. There were additional Latin American students who pursued doctoral studies or short residencies at Maudsley Hospital, under Eysenck's guidance.

The majority of writings by Eysenck was translated in Spain, the country to which Eysenck visited several times, where his ideas were more widespread than in the countries of Latin America (Caballo, 1997; López, Bañúls, & Sanchis, 1991; Pinillos, 1997). Some of his papers were published in Spanish in journals as *Psicología Conductual* [Behavioral Psychology] (Eysenck, 1994), *Anuario de Psicología* [Journal of Psychology] (Eysenck, 1989) or *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología* [Latin American Journal of Psychology] (Eysenck, 1977). The journal *Revista de Psicología General y Aplicada* [Journal of General and Applied Psychology], one of the more ancient journal founded in 1946 in Spain, and main source of information for Latin American psychologists, dedicated posthumous special edition to Eysenck (Pinillos, 1997).

Additionally, several of Eysenck's personality questionnaires were used in some Latin-American countries. Unfortunately, few versions were appropriately standardized. The Eysenck's questionnaires were thought to be an alternative to projective tests and were accepted heartedly by the majority of psychologists with scientific orientation. The first translations and adaptations of personality questionnaires of Eysenck were conducted in Spain by TEA (*Técnicos Especialistas Asociados*), a company specialized in psychological test and marketed in the Latin American region (Aguilar, Tous, & Pueyo, 1990). Subsequently, local adaptations were conducted, especially in Argentina (Omar, 1988; Schmidt, Costa, Firpo, Vion, & Casella, 2008; Squillace, Picón, & Schmidt, 2013), México (Eysenck & Lara Cantú, 1989, 1992), Brazil (Santos & Flores-Mendoza, 2012; Tarrier, Eysenck, & Eysenck, 1980), Chile (Gempp & Cuesta, 2007; Domínguez, 2014), Peru (Arias, 2012; Merino Soto, 2013; Romero & León, 1989), Puerto Rico (Eysenck & Porrata, 1984), and Colombia (Ardila, 1997).

The several adaptations and reviews of the Eysenck personality instruments in the different countries of Latin America are a representation of the impact of his theory. Of course, the wide dissemination of his work around the world is not an arbitrary result of the simple recognition of the Eysenck work, but also, a goal that the author imposed

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